

Council looks to calm traffic after reviewing troubling data

Written By **Paula Brown**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Shelburne Town Council is looking to slow the speed of traffic after receiving data concerning traffic flow and driving patterns within the community.

During their first meeting of the year on Jan. 8, Shelburne Town Council was presented with a traffic calming report from Denyse Morrissey, chief administrative officer, and Jim Moss, director of development and operations.

"We are not alone in dealing with this, it seems to be an emerging significant issue as well as cost for many municipalities. What's very frustrating and equally disappointing from a staff perspective is that we are dealing with this because people are disrespectful of speed limits that are set for the safety of this community," said Morrissey.

Traffic calming is a common physical approach to slowing down traffic and altering motorist behaviour on streets for drivers to have better attention to their surroundings. The goal of traffic calming is to ensure that roadways are safe for all users, such as motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists.

There are a number of different traffic calming measures that can be utilized, including automated speed enforcement (ASE), community safety zones, curb extensions, digital radar speed signs, flexible bollards, lane narrowing, road chicanes, and textured crosswalks.

"It will increase the perception of safety for non-motorized users of the street so that they feel confident that they can utilize those streets," said Morrissey. "We're hoping it will achieve some kind of uniform driving patterns, which is the ultimate challenge we're facing."

In July of 2021, Shelburne Town Council approved and passed a motion to reduce the speed limit in town, with the exception of connecting link roadways, to 40 km/h.

The Town of Shelburne also purchased four Digital Radar Speed Signs (DRSS) from TrafficLogix, designed to advise drivers of their speed and remind them they are speeding.

From February 2022 to October 2023, the Town of Shelburne rotated the four signs between 11 streets to capture the traffic patterns of drivers within the community.

Streets in the data collection included Fiddle Park Lane, First Avenue, Greenwood Street in two locations, Halbert Drive, Main Street, Morden Drive, Muriel Street, Owen Sound Street, Simon Steet, Victoria Street, and William Street.

"It was eye-opening for us because I think as staff, we thought we didn't really have a problem, and we now believe that we have a problem that is going to require significant financial impact," said Morrissey.

According to the report, Main Street saw the greatest number of vehicles on it, with 665,061, from October 2022 to December 2022. Of those drivers, 339,988 were found to be driving over the 50 km/h posted speed limit.

The next street with the highest volume of traffic was Owen Sound, with 493,158 vehicles from August 2023 to October 2023, of which 372,805 were over the 40 km/h speed limit.

“Everybody thinks there is speeding problem on their street but actually having this imperial evidence is really helpful because it allows us to pinpoint the problem areas and we can now demonstrate to the OPP or for ourselves that these are the areas where it's not just somebody standing out there thinking there's a speeding problem; we have the data to back up that in fact this is a problem,” said Shelburne Mayor Wade Mills.

“It's sad too because it's so easily prevented, just be a responsible driver,” said Coun. Lindsay Wegener. “It's going to cost us valuable tax dollars that we can put into something else, when you could just be responsible as a community member in our community.”

In their next steps for calming traffic flow, town staff will contact the Ministry of Transportation to inform them of the Town's intention to decrease the speed limit on Connecting Links within town limits from 50 km/h to 40 km/h.

Staff will also be approaching the County of Dufferin to reduce the speed limits from 60 km/h to 40 km/h on County Road 11 from the intersection of Hwy. 89 to 2nd Line, and on County Road 124 within Shelburne.